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THE JUSTIFICATION:

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A POEM.

BY THE

AUTHOR OF THE DIABOLIAD.

QUISQUIS ERIT VITÆ, SCRIBAM, COLOR. HOR.

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PREFACE.

THERE is no ſpecies of Writing which Mankind abuſe with ſo much virulence in the world, and ſo eagerly attend to in the cloſet, as that of Satire. The Author who poſſeſſes a genius for this ſpecies of compoſition is certain of ſucceſs; and while almoſt every one diſcovers an outward diſpleaſure at his Works, a rapid and extenſive ſale generally marks the real opinion of the World concerning them. That a vicious and degenerate Age, which affords ſuch an infinite variety of objects for the Satiric Muſe, ſhould diſavow its right, and endeavour to leſſen its power to cenſure, is a matter of natural expectation; and that almoſt every individual whoſe vices look for a juſtification in thoſe of others, ſhould indulge a private delight in the page where they may be openly expoſed, is equally conſiſtent with the lamentable infirmity of Human Nature.

To praiſe thoſe who are truly worthy of praiſe, is the moſt delightful employment of the human mind. Few ſatisfactions can equal his, who

wanders in the Garden of the Muſes to form a Chaplet for the brow of Virtue, whoſe tendrils Intereſt will not bind, and where Flattery does not interweave one gaudy bloſſom. This is the moſt pleaſing ſacrifice at the Altar of Juſtice! But the Deity has claims upon us of a leſs pleaſing, tho' not leſs uſeful nature—to plait the Scourges for the Correction of Folly.—This, in the eye of the World, may be an inferior miniſtry;—but it is equally neceſſary to deter from evil by the fear of puniſhment, as to invite to good by the hope of remuneration.—This conduct is eſſential to the nature of Man, and has been adopted by the wiſdom of that Religion which is from above.

Whoever induces men to practiſe Virtue by an irreſiſtible picture of its rewards, or deters from Vice by public expoſure and wholeſome ſeverity, is the Miniſter of Religion, and, in ſome degree, aids the holy purpoſe of fitting imperfect Beings for the participation of perfect natures. Nor have I the leaſt doubt but there are many examples, where the ſalutary expoſure of Satire has fitted the mind for the reception of religious impreſſions.—When a bad man is properly expoſed by the former, if his Nature, from long habits of vice, is not become incorrigible, he will have a natural recourſe to the latter for thoſe comforts which it is impoſſible he can obtain from any other ſource. For this particular end Satire directs its ſhafts to known Perſons and Characters, by whom general ſeverities would be ſcarcely felt, and againſt which the common ſelf-deluſions of the heart would be too often ſufficient to protect them.

There are many grievous exceſſes which Law does not reach, and concerning which the menaces of Religion are ineffectual. Satire takes, as it were, the middle way; ſupplies, in ſome meaſure, the defects of Law in erecting a Tribunal of its own; and, by creating a ſenſibility to its own ſeverities, prepares the mind to be affected by thoſe of Religion. I cannot be perſuaded, as ſome have been, that the ſevere public notice of Indecorums and Exceſſes can render a bad man worſe. If it ſhould make him feel, there is a chance, at leaſt, of making him better; and this alone is a ſufficient juſtification to any one who endeavours at the taſk of Reformation.—Beſides, however unavailing the chaſtiſement may be to hardened offenders, it will, ſurely, poſſeſs the ſame deterring qualities which wiſe Legiſlators have ſuppoſed to belong to all puniſhments;—it may check the career of Vice, and give new vigour to deſponding Virtue.

There are examples, ſays *Monteſquieu*, which are worſe than actual crimes; and more States, he adds, have been undone by men who have violated the Manners, than by thoſe who have violated the Laws.—If, therefore, the Pen of the Satiriſt effectuates an attention to public appearance and decorum, it anſwers a very good and conſequential deſign, by leſſening the contagion of bad example: ſo that if it ſhould not be able to awaken virtuous ſentiments in the boſom of a vicious Character, it may be allowed to poſſeſs the power of throwing ſome degree of reſtraint upon his public procedure: and this, if *Monteſquieu*'s opinion

is

is of any weight in the argument, would be making a very considerable acquisition in behalf of Virtue and good Manners.

To all but the most abandoned Characters, there is a natural desire of Fame; and even they, too often, annex a false idea of Glory to their vicious eccentricities. It cannot, therefore, but be highly unpleasant and disagreeable to men possessed of the least sensibility, however Fortune, Rank, or Station may have placed them above the common inconveniencies of Public Odium, to have their pictures drawn by the Poet with all their imperfections about them, for the review, contempt, and repetition of the Crowd; and in colours which may, perhaps, convey the unfavourable image of them to distant times. If this be the case, and I think it will not be presumption in me, or the having too favourable an opinion of the Age, to suppose it so,—the fear as well as the lash of Satire may, as I have already observed, teach Prudence and Precaution, where it cannot inspire the Love of Virtue.

General Satire may afford instruction, nay, may give a wholesome alarm to unsophisticated minds. It may convey to Youth the picture of those vices which will assail him, and those Characters which he will meet with in the World, and warn him of its dangers. It may also offer its descriptions to the dubious and varying application of Mankind. But Personal Satire, by pointing out its objects, prevents bad men from flying to any subterfuge, or practising any evasion to elude its exposure. It holds them forth to the immediate and certain odium of their fellow-

creatures.

creatures. That this exerciſe, therefore, of poetical talents is worthy of praiſe and encouragement, will, I truſt, be readily acknowledged by every virtuous mind, without ſeeking for a juſtification in the example of the many great and good Men who have practiſed it. Indeed, in a Free Country, where the Laws afford ſuch a latitude for the exerciſe of Virtue, the opportunities of purſuing an oppoſite conduct muſt be many and inevitable: ſo that if Religion ſhould loſe its controul over evil diſpoſitions, there would be but few temporal corrections left, or at leaſt exerciſed, but in the manly exertions of the Satiriſt. Indeed, ſuch is the preſent ſtate of Religion, that I may venture to aſſert, not one of the Rectors of *St. James*'s, *St. Martin*'s, *St. George*'s *Hanover-Square*, or *St. Margaret*'s *Weſtminſter*, would think it a prudent ſtep to remonſtrate perſonally with many of their noble and opulent Pariſhioners upon their unchriſtian conduct;—the greater part of whom, as they ſeldom or never frequent the public worſhip of the Church, may reſide in a Pariſh their whole lives without hearing the voice, or even knowing the face of their Spiritual Paſtor and Maſter *.

The Satiriſt, therefore, to fulfil that deſign which the liberal ſpirit of our Law cannot reach, and the neceſſary politeneſs of Modern Religion

* I would not be thought even to hint, that the Paſtoral Care of theſe Pariſhes is diſregarded by the Miniſters of them; I only mean to juſtify the obſervations I have made on the immorality of Modern Times, when the moſt pious and rational Chriſtian would think it *Saint-errantry* in any of thoſe Reverend Men to attempt the ſtrict duties of a Pariſh Prieſt.—This is not an Age for Miniſters to practiſe Evangelical Sincerity;—at leaſt, out of their Pulpit.

dare not undertake, ſhould not content himſelf with one or two occaſional efforts. Vice is a monſter, whoſe ſcaly rind mocks the point of a ſingle dart, tho' thrown by the ſtrongeſt arm, and can be alone ſubdued by firm and repeated attacks. On this idea I propoſe to publiſh, as particular Events or Characters may demand my notice, and as my abilities, ſuch as they are, may ſerve me, a ſeries of Poems, wherein the Manners and Characters of the Preſent Times will be repreſented with truth and attention. To theſe, perhaps, the following pages may ſerve as a natural Introduction.

As for the particular motives to theſe Publications, which, without doubt, will be unfavourably repreſented, if I write the truth, no one will have a right to examine them; and ſhould I be found guilty of a willing falſhood, I will readily acknowledge the juſtice of thoſe who may ſuſpect them to be of the very worſt nature. But in ſuch an Age as this, it is well if any motive can induce men poſſeſſed of Satirical Talents to make the Fool aſhamed of his folly, and drive the Vermin of the World from their holes and lurking-places. The more noble and diſintereſted the ſpirit of Satire, the more effectual will be its exertions;—and the more blameleſs the life of him who exerts it, the more honourable will be his office. But if there ſhould not be virtue enough in the Age to perform this important buſineſs for the ſake of Virtue, the weakneſs and paſſions of ſome men may promote the benefit of others. Theſe may be ſtimulated by the hope of Gain, the impulſe of Vanity, or even by the ſpirit of Revenge, to thoſe duties which, in the corruptions of the preſent Times, ſo ſeldom owe their exertions to the Love of Juſtice.

This Deſign has been repreſented to me as big with danger; but the man who is deſtitute of courage, wants an eſſential requiſite to ſucceed in great and noble employments.—Indeed, he whoſe purſuits expoſe him to the violent paſſions of wicked men, will find it moſt eſſentially neceſſary to his ſucceſs and his repoſe. I fear not the threats of impetuous Youth! the hand of Greatneſs dare not ſmite me! and Malice will tremble as ſhe purſues her dark path to accompliſh my diſtreſs. This may be thought to be the boaſt of Vanity, or the tone of Affectation. It may be ſo, for I may be deceived; but, if I am capable of forming a Judgment from the circumſtances about me, it is the language of Truth;—and if I know myſelf,—it is the language of my heart.

THE JUSTIFICATION.

L——. WHAT ails my Friend?—what means th' exploring eye,
That ſeems to commerce with the diſtant ſky?
Some Muſe, perhaps, beyond my vulgar ſight,
Does to the Bard unveil her awful flight.
Tell me! oh tell me! is the Virgin ſeen
With gentle aſpect, or with threat'ning mien?
Will Satire's ſearching venom ſtill prevail,
Or Panegyric gild the pleaſing tale?

Long have I wiſh'd with freedom to impart
The ſecret counſels of my anxious heart;
To turn your footſteps from the rugged way,
To where the flow'rets bloom, and zephyrs play.
Fain would I urge your Muſe to take her flight,
From the dark dungeon and the dreary night;
To the bright Sun her alter'd courſe to raiſe,
And warm the chilling cenſure into praiſe.

Compoſe thoſe conſcious ſmiles, and deign to lend
A patient hearing to your faithful Friend.

P——. Should pride within my looks forbidden lie,
Do you but frown—I'm all humility.
At your command each ſmile ſhall diſappear,
'Tis * * ſpeaks, and I am bound to hear.
Come then, my Lord, and let us onward ſtray,
While the Sun ſheds intolerable day,
To catch the breeze in yonder winding glade,
Or court the coolneſs of th' embow'ring ſhade;

Or from the ſultry noon to ſeek repoſe,
Where the Roſe bloſſoms and the Laurel grows
To grace the ſacred Dome, unknown to Fame,
Whoſe letter'd friezes gleam with Friendſhip's name.
Friendſhip, a public Virtue now no more;
No longer worſhipp'd, as in days of yore,
In Forums, Senates, and the Civil Bar *,
Or 'mid the horrors of th' embattel'd War.

Far

* *The Civil Bar.* That Private Friendſhip is to have no concern in the Public Profeſſion of a Barriſter at Law, was determined at the laſt *Lent Aſſizes* for the county and city of *Worceſter*.—The fact is as follows: A Counſellor of high rank, and very acknowledged abilities, without any application on his part, was nominated by a very conſiderable body of the Inhabitants of Worceſter, as a Candidate to repreſent that City in Parliament at the laſt General Election; and was ſupported by a great number of their ſuffrages, though without ſucceſs.---Some time after, the ſame Party cauſed a Proſecution to be commenced againſt a Perſon, who had voted on the other ſide, for Perjury. When this trial came on to be heard, the learned Advocate, to the great ſurprize of his Friends and Supporters, was engaged againſt them. This unexpected conduct produced great complaints againſt him; as he was ſuppoſed, thereby, to have acted in direct oppoſition to thoſe principles of gratitude, which good offices never fail to create in liberal minds: and it was the more ſtrongly reprobated in him, as, from his eminence on the Circuit, he muſt be ſure of being employed, though an early application might not have been made to him by his Friends,

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Far from the World her calm retreat is made,
And the rare Vot'ry ſeeks her in the ſhade,
While you, at length, from public bondage free,
Turn from the flattering croud to ſmile on me,
—There mute Attention on your words ſhall wait,
And holy Friendſhip rule the deep debate.

L——. And know, my Friend, the fault will be your own,
Whene'er my ſmiles contract into a frown.
But ſure 'tis ſtrange, to me 'tis paſſing ſtrange,
To find within your breaſt this ſudden change;

on the ſuppoſed certainty of his not taking a Brief againſt them. What Juſtification the Gentleman made, I know not.—If he made any, I doubt not of its propriety.---But the Judge, in his Charge to the Jury, fully exculpated him, by declaring, that it was the duty of every Counſel, upon all occaſions, and without reſerve, to take the Brief which ſhould be firſt offered him.---I do not mean to charge the learned and able Advocate with any impropriety in the matter;—I cannot ſuppoſe he acted otherwiſe than the known eſtabliſhed uſage of the Bar would well juſtify.---He could not have any temptation, nor from what I have heard of his private character, the leaſt inclination to do otherwiſe. All I mean to prove is,---That, by a ſolemn, judicial Opinion, Friendſhip is not ſuppoſed and cannot be expected, to operate in the public Profeſſion of a Barriſter at Law.

To

To ſee you quarrel thus with Common Senſe,
And play the truant to Benevolence;—
To quit your prudence, and to dare the rage
Of the bad men of this degen'rate Age.
Where are thoſe ſoft'ning powers that could impart
Their ſympathetic feelings to the heart;
That with a tale of well-imagin'd woe
Could make the breaſt to heave, the tear to flow;
And thus, in guiſe of tenderneſs, befriend
The cauſe of Virtue, and her realms extend?
Thoſe tender feelings, once your honeſt boaſt,
If chang'd by Satire, are for ever loſt.
Haſte, then, to leave the rigid Cenſor's name,
And take, oh take, a ſmoother road to Fame!
'Tis madneſs, when the Olive will afford
The means of good, to draw th' inhuman Sword!

P——. Indeed, my Lord, you err; the charge is vain,
Nor does me right—unalter'd I remain.

No fractious Dæmon in my breaſt has ſtrove
To drop its acid on the milk of Love.
That tender ſentiment your kindneſs gives
To my paſt life, within my boſom lives:
Nor will it leave its long-accuſtom'd ſeat,
Till Life's laſt, lingering pulſes ceaſe to beat;
'Till all your acts of friendſhip muſt be o'er,
And you can hear my grateful voice no more.
Frown not, my Judge, recall that look ſevere;
While I defend my cauſe, with patience hear:
Let candour on my well-weigh'd words attend,
And if the plea ſhould fail, condemn your Friend.

Know then, my Lord, the faſt and tender tie
Of civil life, that's call'd Humanity,
Has but one object—Human-kind to bleſs,
And aid the ſcheme of general happineſs.
For this great purpoſe, ſhe adapts her plan
To the frail, various character of Man.

Thus ſome are melting, others are ſevere;
To theſe ſhe courage gives, to thoſe a tear:
Courage that dares to meet the threat'ning blow,
And tears prepar'd to ſoothe the afflicting woe.
To ſome, more partial, ſhe imparts the whole,
And blends the daring with the melting ſoul.

The prudent Father who his offspring loves,
By kind chaſtiſement his affection proves.
When in uplifted hands the rod he bears,
Nor heeds the little culprit's flowing tears,
Does he a Father's tenderneſs deny?——
No, no, my Lord,—'tis all Humanity!
——Again: When many a year is paſt and gone,
The cautious Parent, trembling for his Son,
Juſt on the launch, with eager haſte, to brave
The dangers of the World's tempeſtuous wave,
Graſps his young hand, and heaves the unbidden ſigh—
What call you this, my Lord?——Humanity!

Or, ſhould he mourn the Boy's untimely doom,
Say, as he follows to the gaping tomb,
Should the big drops guſh from his downcaſt eye,
Is this a weakneſs——or Humanity?—

L——. Theſe ſentiments with pleaſure I commend;
Again I hear the language of my Friend.
Sweet Peace be his, whoſe kindneſs may impart
The healing cordial to the wounded heart!
Sweet Peace be his, whoſe lenient arts beguile
The plaintive look, and change it to a ſmile!
Sweet Peace be his, who wipes the weeping eye,
And dries the tear of ſobbing Miſery!—
But higher joys ſhall to his boſom flow,
Who ſaves the eye from tears, the heart from woe!
—A far, far greater honour he ſecures,
Who ſtops the coming ill, than he who cures.
Indeed, my Bard, I never ſhall agree,
That Satire's friendly to Humanity.

P——. Satire, my Lord, employ'd in the defence
Of injur'd Virtue, is benevolence;—
And ſuch is mine!—The verſe that ſtrives to mend
The diſſipated heart, is Virtue's friend:
While the vain Muſe that does on Vice beſtow
Its frothy flatteries, is Virtue's foe.
That foe I'll combat——from her plaited hair
The ſhading plumes my angry verſe ſhall tear,
That hide the viper train who breed their poiſon there.
I'll ſtrip the Fiend, and to the wondering eye
Expoſe the ſcaly form of Flattery.
Your tenderneſs, perhaps, may wiſh to ſoothe
The hardy phraſe, and check the tone of Truth;
T' undreſs the Lady with a Virgin's care,
And tell ſome melting ſtory in her ear.
Vice mocks the ſoothing ſtrain; a tender tale
May ſtrengthen Virtue, but will ne'er prevail
O'er lawleſs Paſſion. Do the frantic cries,
The heaving boſom, or the burſting ſighs

Of the young Virgin reach the flinty heart
Of hungry Luſt, or one remorſe impart?
When ſhe implores, does the rude Spoiler hear
The ſoft beſeechings of her bitter prayer?
And when ſhe tells the woes of ruin'd fame;
And when ſhe calls upon a Father's name,
Or paints his hoary ſorrows; will the tale
Soften the brutal Traitor, and prevail?
Or make him ſtill with keener guſt purſue
The foul deſign, and urge him to undo?

If daring Vice, no longer a diſgrace,
Gives fame and luſtre to the human race;
If wanton villainy and rude exceſs
Hold forth the verdant palm of happineſs;
Satire muſt be an unrelenting foe,
That at their honours aims the hoſtile blow.
But you, my honour'd Lord, to whom 'tis given
To practiſe every virtue under Heaven,

Well know, in reaſon and religion's plan,
The Foes of Vice to be the Friends of Man.
Vice is the ſource of all our real woe,
Of human happineſs the inhuman foe.
Whene'er the virtuous boſom heaves a ſigh,
The Gods themſelves look down with ſympathy.
The virtuous man, my Lord, howe'er diſtreſt,
Bears in himſelfthe means of being bleſt:
'Mid pains and tortures he can turn his eye
To the ſure mercies of a pitying Sky.
He knows the common end of all his woe,
And waits with patience the protecting blow;
He ſmiles in death, and views beyond the tomb,
The glorious proſpect of a world to come.

The common ills of life we all muſt try,
But Guilt alone is real miſery.
The thought of guilty deeds alarms the brave,
And binds with heavier chains the ſhackled ſlave.

Guilt lights the flaming Judgments on the wall
That ſtruck th' ASSYRIAN pale, and will appal
The heart that other terrors would diſdain,
And make the warm blood curdle in the vein.
—Guilt is the ſcorpion ſting whoſe biting ſmart
Winds through the deep receſſes of the heart;
The never-dying worm that will ſurvive
To guilty Souls, when Bodies ceaſe to live.
—If Satire then can curb with tighten'd rein
The daring vice, and make its efforts vain;
If the keen terrors of her 'vengeful rod
Can force the lurking vice from its abode,
And drive it forward to the public eye,
To bear the ſtamp of public infamy;
If ſhe can make the bluſt'ring Bully pale,
Or pierce with ſearching ſhaft the plaited mail
Of frontleſs Impudence; if Satire dare
To weave diſgrace around the penſion'd Star,
Your ſteady Juſtice never can deny
That ſhe is friendly to Humanity?

L——. How ſweetly Fancy, with her painted Train,
Beſtrews her whimſies on the Poet's brain!
What magic forms appear, what viſions riſe,
To charm with gawdy glare the Poet's eyes!
How rude in me the gilded dream to break,
And call th' enchanted Poet to awake!
But Truth, my Friend, looks round in vain to find
Theſe grand effects of Satire in Mankind.
S——, ſo long the Cenſor's fruitful theme,
Careleſs of Britain, punts upon the ſtream,
And from th' official barge delights to ſhew
His pale-fac'd Miſtreſs to the fry below.
Is *L*——— enroll'd in Virtue's liſt?——
Or Couſin A—— turn'd a Methodiſt?
MARS will from cenſure ſhield his FAVOURITE SON,
And Satire's thrown away on *L*———!
E'en he would ſcarcely feel, ſhould you rehearſe,
The *Terrier*'s Barkings * in ſonorous verſe.

* *The Terrier's Barkings.*] The ſignature of a great many ſucceſſive Letters which appeared, ſome time ago, in a Morning Paper, and were remarkable for their ſevere reprehenſions of this noble Lord.

Does — — ceaſe a drunken Catch to roar?
Does — — love a Bawdy-houſe no more?
Say, has thy Muſe been able to expand
The cloſe-contracted heart and graſping hand
Of hungry H—ſt—d? Has thy Satire won
To Virtue's nobleſt deeds his darling Son?
And doſt thou think its ſharpneſs will impart
One gen'rous ſentiment to B— —s heart?
Still he is worthleſs; and, in ſpite of you,
Will ſmile and ſmirk as he was wont to do!
Does giddy Beauty, aw'd by thee, pull down
The nodding height of Folly's feather'd crown?
Will ſprightly D— —y leave the rattling Square
To ſuckle Babies in the Surry air?
Or fair *Devonia* quit th' *enchanting Ton*
For Wiſdom's graver joys at WIMBLEDON?
Come, tell the profits of this laſhing trade;
Produce one reformation you have made,
I will myſelf before your virtue bend,
And aſk forgiveneſs of my injur'd Friend.

P——. You cannot know, my Lord, who never ſtray
From Virtue's fair and ever open way,
The various arts of Vice;—you never trod
The dark mæanders of her foul abode;
Where the baſe Fiend, with daily toil, prepares
The bold temptations and the ſecret ſnares;
Where grinning Scandal frames the daily lie,
And cunning weaves the web of flattery:
The lie that Malice, with inſidious aim,
Shoots from her well-ſtrung bow at Virtue's name:
The gentle Flattery that watchful Art
Slides, unperceiv'd, into the heedleſs heart.
There Falſhood forms, for unexperienc'd Youth,
The ſubtle glaſs that o'er the brow of Truth
Throws frowns of angry aſpect, and beguiles
Her own diſguſting face with winning ſmiles.
There buſy Spirits forge, with curious art,
The triple plates of braſs, to guard the heart
From Reaſon's bold aſſault;—and the glad eye
Of Pride beholds the ſtubborn armory.

There helliſh Miniſters with fatal care
From baneful drugs the potent juice prepare;
Whoſe dead'ning poſſet dulls the mental ſenſe
Againſt the wholeſome pains of Penitence.
Such are the arts I combat, ſuch the foe,
At whoſe proud creſt I aim the pointed blow.

Think you at once the Villain will reveal
The biting pangs the Muſe ſhall make him feel?
Vice, obſtinate in ill, will never own
The awful ſtrength that bears the miſchief down.
Perverſe and proud, and grinning with her pain,
She'll ſtrive with ſmiles to prove the ſcourgings vain,
Or, like a coward, tremble to impart
The juſtice of the ſhaft that wounds her heart.
B— —, who fears the laſhes yet to come,
May ſmile in public; but he weeps at home;
In his ſad chamber threats, and ſtorms, and ſwears;
Then wets the wakeful pillow with his tears.

If widow'd Love ſhould aſk him why he weeps,
What Sorrow round her bed its vigil keeps,—
'Tis *Britain*'s *danger* fills his *patriot* eyes,
Or *Friendſhip's ſorrows* aid the thin diſguiſe.
The long night paſt, he wipes the tears away,
And ſhapes the ſmile to grace him through the day.

When S** leaves the Navy's dread command,
Lur'd by the beck'ning of a female hand;
Or yields the Trident of the briny flood,
To ſhare the labours of the angling rod;
And ſteers the veſſel through its wat'ry way
To where, in mazy dance, the gudgeons play;
Or, fond each trifling duty to perform,
Impales upon the hook the writhing worm;
Whene'er in ſports like theſe ſuch men engage,
Behold the opiates of declining Age,
That hates the dire remembrance of the paſt,
And fears th' approaching terrors of the laſt.

The modish Fair may, for a while, defy
The voice of Truth, or call it Calumny;
But eager Time will haften to deſtroy
Each changeful fabric of unreal joy.
Time, on the Muſes wings, ſhall quickly bear
His ſolemn warnings to *Devonia*'s ear;
Shall make her bluſh through Folly's vain diſguiſe,
And gladly learn of SPENCER to be wiſe.

If there's a power within the ſoul of Man
That, with unerring judgment, knows to ſcan
The thoughts that lurk within the human heart;
From whom no ſhrewd device, no cunning art
Can veil the ſecret wiſh;—whoſe ſearching eye
Pierces the gloom of dark hypocriſy;
If this Eternal Judge to Man is given,
By the deep counſels and the grace of Heaven,
To check his footſteps, if from right he ſtray,
And turn them into Virtue's better way;——

Should Satire, by its bold and nervous line,
Aid and ſupport the glorious deſign;
Oh, dare not look with anger on the rod,
That aids the immediate Miniſter of God!
Tell me, my Lord, if this celeſtial ſenſe,
Known by the awful name of Conſcience,
Should deign from quick'ning Satire to receive
The means by which its ſlighted ſtings can give
Renew'd affliction, and, with force, impart
Its poignant ſorrows to th' awaken'd heart;
Will your enlighten'd kindneſs ſtill refuſe
Its ready praiſe to the correcting Muſe?

L——. However juſt your Satire, ſtill I find
It wounds my tenderneſs for Human-kind.
I cannot ſee the gnaſhing culprit bleed,
But Pity wakes abhorrence at the deed!
Is there no gentler means to rouſe the heart
To love of noble deeds?—No ſoft'ning art

To tempt the truant back to Virtue's ſchool?
Come, change your angry ſcourge for ridicule;
For laughing wit give up the Cenſor's toil,
And clothe your frowning viſage with a ſmile:
The pointed humour of a well-told Tale
Will call a bluſh when angry Lectures fail.
Vice, harden'd by the ſharp aſſault, defies
Proud Satire and her harſh ſeverities.
Thus goaded, ſhe grows bolder from the ſmart,
And clings more cloſe, and forms th' obdurate heart.
Indeed, my Friend, I do not wiſh to prove
A cruel temper in the man I love:
But thus, uncall'd and unprovok'd, to throw
Your angry darts around and dare the foe,
I might call raſhneſs;--but the World will cry,
With all its tongues,—" 'Tis wanton Cruelty."

P——. The World, my noble Friend, is that the Court
To which your wiſdom tells me to reſort?

Where looſe Opinion, changeful as the hour,
Is Judge ſupreme, and boaſts unrivall'd power.
Why would your Lordſhip urge me to purſue
A path that never yet was trod by you?
To-day its varying voice may damn my name,
The next may change its cenſure into fame.
Vice is the worſt diſeaſe that mortals know,
The ſource of preſent pain and future woe;
And ſure he merits well of human kind,
Who ſtrives to quench its poiſon in the mind.
In this humane attempt ſhould he apply
The thirſty leech, or burning cautery;
The World may rail, but Virtue will approve
The deed of cruelty and call it love;
And while the ſickly minds their pains endure,
Lament the ill, but hope th' approaching cure.

When POTTS, with matchleſs ſkill, employs the knife
Whoſe wholeſome wound preſerves the patient's life;

When, careleſs of the ſick man's bitter moan,
He from its painful cave draws forth the ſtone;
Say, does the love of blood his art command,
Or urge the ſaving rigors of his hand?
Perhaps, you'd have him ſhake with tender fear,
Or load th' obſervant eye-lids with a tear;
Or, 'mid the tortures of the ſore diſeaſe,
Indulge in ſmiles to give the patient eaſe.
The trifling whimſies of the Modiſh Fool
May feel the leſs'ning laugh of ridicule:
But Vice diſdains the laugh, nor has a fear
For Wit's appointed ſtroke or cutting ſneer.
To ſuch diſeaſes Satire muſt apply
The keeneſt probe of mental ſurgery;
Nor is he cruel whoſe ſatiric art
Cuts the fell gangrene from the villain's heart.
—That work, howe'er ſevere, can ne'er be wrong,
Where Virtue guides the pen or aids the ſong.

L——. Alas! whate'er their conduct, all pretend,
That Virtue is their Genius and their Friend.
The patriot ardor, the rebellious flame,
With tortur'd Virtue equal kindred claim.
'Tis Virtue glows in gallant PERCY's breaſt;
By Virtue captive LEE is doubly bleſt.
The Merchant feels it in the thirſt of gain;—
The Soldier ſees it 'mid th' embattel'd plain;—
The Hermit wooes her in the ſhaggy dell;—
Deep in the gloom of ſome monaſtic cell,
The Monk, 'mid mummery and thoughtleſs prayer,
Thinks he beholds her meagre image there.
Aſk B—— —, he will tell you that it lies
In quick reverſions and in legacies;—
In narrow views of profit and of pelf;
The hate of others, and the love of ſelf:
Or that the beſt and higheſt good of life
Springs from the fortune of a *golden Wife*;
While careleſs M—— can a virtue find,
In giving riches to the ſcattering wind.

The

The gentle C— — feels it in the hand
That bears, with conſcious graſp, the taper wand;
The courtly badge, the ornamental toy,
So aptly form'd to pleaſe the roſy boy.
What numbers ſeek it in a married life!
Yet ſome there are who hate it in a Wife;
And *Barrymore*, grown wild in Pleaſure's dance,
Thinks that ſhe finds the *ſilly thing* in *France*.

P——. While I, my Lord, the dupe of ſelf-deceit,
Like them led on by the experienc'd cheat,
See through my Works an honeſt virtue ſhine,
And caſt its beaming rays on every line.

Thus through the varying World how few agree
In what is Virtue, Truth, Humanity:
And yet, fair Virtue ever is the ſame,
Nor warps her nature, tho' ſhe change her name.
'Tis not an idle word to charm the Throng,
There are the truly good, to whom belong
The love of doing right and fear of doing wrong.

The well-digeſted ardor to excel;
The conſcious dignity of acting well;
To check, with ſteady rein, each vain deſire;
To calm, by Reaſon's aid, the riſing fire
Of lawleſs paſſion, and, by her controul,
Direct each ſecret impulſe of the ſoul:
This, this is Virtue, whereſoe'er ſhe dwell;
In crowded Courts, or in the Hermit's cell.
To *India*'s ſons her flame ſhe can impart,
And paint her beauty on the *Bramin*'s heart;
She may be found where proſtrate Vot'ries lie
Before the bleeding ſcene of CALVARY.
'Neath ſcalding ſuns, and 'mid the burning ſand,
She does the ſwarthy African command;
And in the diſtant Iſland, lonely plac'd
Far on the boſom of the wat'ry waſte,
The ſecret natives bow before her throne,
And think their virtue and the world their own.
E'en I, my Lord, before her altar bend,
And boaſt the friendſhip of the Muſes Friend.

L——. Alas, that doubting World which you deſpiſe,
The well-fram'd motive of your verſe denies.
Say, does your life in full perfection ſhine,
And are your virtues rigid as your line?
Say, are your well-weigh'd actions free from blame,
And can you boaſt the Cenſor's ſpotleſs name?
While ſharp, envenom'd Satire forms your lays,
Can you demand the tributary praiſe?
Does no baſe paſſion urge you to declare
With Vice and vicious men this open war?
And, as you wield the weapon, can you ſhew
A fair, unſoil'd example to the foe?
To this cloſe language of the World attend;
That thankleſs World you ſtrive, in vain, to mend.

P——. In truth, my Lord, if baſe, degenerate men
Were never laſh'd till Angels held the pen;
If ſuch reforming powers are only given
To the celeſtial denizens of Heaven;

If

If ſuch conſummate Virtue muſt belong
To him who ventures on ſatiric ſong,
The unrelenting World may well agree
To hurl its vengeance and its ſneers at me.
E'en B—— may my utmoſt power defy,
And give one ſmile that does not tell a lie;—
One honeſt ſmile that does not flow from art,
And ſpeaks, for once, the language of his heart.
But Imperfection is the lot of Man;
Strive all we may, my Lord, do all we can,
Without the guidance of celeſtial Grace,
We run with erring ſteps the vital race.
Now, with an eagle's wing, we upwards fly,
And ape the virtues of the pitying ſky;
Now, with a ſerpent's luſt, on earth we ſtray,
And roll our volumes through the duſty way.
Where is Perfection?—You, perhaps, may tell,
Who always think ſo right, and act ſo well.
Does ſhe to gilded palaces reſort,
And cleanſe the tainted manners of a Court?

Will

Will ſhe be found, amid the wrangling Bar,
To rule the conflicts of the wordy-war?
Or does ſhe to the *Mitred Bench* repair,
And there repoſe her flight,—for LOWTH is there?
Alas! my Lord, in doubt to whom 'tis given,
You leave the Earth, and turn your thoughts to Heaven.
—But, while all-ſacred Truth directs my pen,
Vain are the tauntings of unhallow'd men.
'Tis a ſtale ſhift, to every villain known,
By others vices to ſupport their own.
Whate'er my errors,—if my verſe aſcends
To Virtue's ſorrows, and her cauſe defends;
If I diſdain dark Slander's ſullen lie,
And the ſtill tale of artful Calumny;
If I ne'er paint the vice I cannot prove,
Whate'er my errors,—to the Powers above
I leave my ſecret ends,—without a fear
But I ſhall find an abſolution there.

Perhaps

Perhaps you think, like many an hungry Bard,
I court the Muſes for their lean reward;
Or that I write, as —— —— cogs the dye,
From the ſad impulſe of Neceſſity.
Pale want will make the proudeſt bend his knee;
No wonder then it makes a Bard of me.
Th' unbiaſs'd Judge diſpenſes law for gold;
Each welcome Term the quarter's due is tol*.
The tythe-pig gruntles in the Vicar's ear,
Such the reward of preaching and of prayer.
Whate'er the toil, for gold we all apply,
And millions are the pay of Royalty.

L——. But ſome have dar'd to ſay, the offer'd bribe
Would quickly call you from the Writing Tribe,
Or turn the rapid current of your lays
From ſnarling cenſure into fawning praiſe;

* *Quarter's due is told.*] The ſalary of the Judges, if I am not miſinformed, is regularly made, in quarterly payments, every Term.

That all your hoard of Satire's to be ſold,
If any fool would give th' expected gold.

P——. They reaſon well:—'tis therefore that I chuſe
Such *generous* ſubjects for my venal Muſe;
Men who regard not wealth, whoſe only aim
Looks to procure a well-eſtabliſh'd name;
Who wou'd bribe high to ſave their dear renown
From the inſulting hiſſes of the Town;
Or from the Poet's cenſure to preſerve
Their life, would give their wealth, and nearly ſtarve.
For this I tap at B—— ——'s chicken breaſt,
That ever yearns to ſuccour the diſtreſs'd:
For this I call on H—— ——'s honour'd name,
Whoſe deeds of bounty are the pride of fame.
From ſuch I ſoon muſt have the huſhing ſtore,
And I ſhall be a Satiriſt no more.
When theſe rewards attend my hardy ſong,
I'll ſeek my native woods, and hold my tongue;

Or,

Or, leaving angry carols, charm the time;
With ſhepherd's reed and inoffenſive rhyme.

L——. You laugh, my friend; I ſee your ſcornful eye
Bright with the beams of ſneering Irony.

P——. 'Tis true, my noble Lord, I uſe no art,
My viſage ſpeaks the language of my heart.
By good or ill no penſion could be won
From ſordid H— —, or his ſordid ſon:
Should I for ever ſtrike ſuch flints as theſe,
No glittering ſparks would mount into a blaze:
As well might I expect the flowing tide
Would hear my feeble voice and backward glide:
Or, at my call, the hard rock would beſtow
Its guſhing rivers on the meads below.
—With them, whate'er their fondneſs for a name,
The loſs of gold is more than loſs of Fame.
'Tis plain then ſuch deſigns can never ſway
My wiſer Muſe to frame the rigid lay.

If lazy, lying Want ſhould e'er ſuggeſt
Such projects to my mercenary breaſt,
I would beſiege the minds of ſofteſt mould,
Whoſe wounded fears would bleed with ready gold.
Such, ſuch there are! But know, that I diſdain
Theſe coward arts, and will my courſe maintain
With ſteady courage, that, unus'd to yield,
Defies the vaunted dangers of the field.

L——. Bold is the man, my Friend, who dares engage
The vengeful vices of a wicked Age.
Not bolder he whoſe bark firſt dar'd to brave
The unknown paſſage of the ſtormy wave:
Not bolder he, who, in the midway air,
Hangs on the rock and plucks the ſamphire there.
—Think you to live in eaſe where'er you go?
Revenge, Revenge prepares the bitter foe!
I ſee him all around his terrors ſhed,
The well-pois'd cane high-waving o'er your head;

I view the rapier urge the deadly ſtrife,
And aim its ſharpneſs at your trembling life.
Nor theſe alone:—A dark, infernal brood
Of angry Spirits, thirſting for thy blood,
Shall whet th' impatient dart, whoſe certain flight,
Unſeen amid the coward gloom of night,
May wound thy peace.—E'en treach'rous fear ſhall dare,
In B——'s form, to wage the ſecret war.

P——. Tho' you, with friendly zeal, foretel my woe,
I mean to live in peace and comfort too.
If B——'s vengeful wiſhes could prevail,
And, at his word, thoſe ſtreams of comfort fail
Which freſhen life,—ſtill my moſt ſore diſtreſs
Should ne'er be chang'd for B——'s happineſs.
I want no lulling cymbals to deceive,
The tireſome hours, and tell me not to grieve:
I want no tongue to give my heart the lie
By any dear-bought, hard-earn'd flattery.
Upon the cold ground I can lay my head,

Or reſt in caverns on the ſea-beat ſhore,
Tho' tempeſts howl around and billows roar.
Let the rude ſtorm aſſail!——Its utmoſt din
Shall rage in vain without——'tis peace within!
—Look in my works; and if you there ſhould ſee
Truth in the page, ſuppreſs your fears for me.
—I laugh at danger.—Should your angry men
Draw forth their ſwords,—I'll anſwer with my pen,
Let them, in air, their threat'ning canes diſplay;
I bear a cane, my Lord, as well as they.
Nor will theſe certain arrows of the night,
Tho' poiſon paint their points, my ſoul affright.
Should Dragon Tyranny unfold its claw,—
I claim protection of protecting Law:
That Law which to the meaneſt will afford
Its equal bleſſings with the proudeſt Lord;
That will to all, who to its covert fly,
Secure their Peace and guard their Liberty:
The Peace which hoarded riches cannot give,
And will with Virtue in the deſert live:

The Liberty whoſe wings aloft will bear
Th' advent'rous Muſe,—and teach her not to fear.
Protected thus by Law and Truth, my ſong
Shall laſh the villain with the knotted thong
Of angry Satire;—nor ſhall B——'s fears,
His pallid looks, and apprehenſive tears
Awake my pity.—He ſhall ſoon receive
The keen correction that the Muſe can give.
—While I can write, each Winter ſhall afford
Its laſhings for that mean, unpitied Lord:
While I can write, each Winter ſhall impart
Some awful leſſon to his trembling heart.
The Uſurer too ſhall feel me, tho' he wear
The Garter'd Ribbon and the ſilver Star!
Th' indignant Muſe, undaunted, ſhall command
The honours of the *Stationary-wand*;
Nor ſhall the ſacred preſence of a King
Stop her keen flight or blunt her whetted ſting.
—I'll hunt the noble quarry, tho' it fly
To ſhelter 'neath a Royal canopy.

In vain will he to palaces repair,
Nor Royal favour ſhall protect him there.
E'en at his hour of prayer, when counted gold
Does to his pious eye the god unfold,
I will attend, and urge the bitter ſigh
To damp the joys of his idolatry *.

L——. Stop, ſtop, thou haſty boy, thy raſh career,
And, ere we part, my final counſels hear.
How ſmooth ſoe'er each poliſh'd line may flow,
Tho' Truth had held the pen, 'twill make a foe;
And if the angry World ſhould join the cry,
I fear, my Friend, for your ſecurity.

P——. And yet this angry World, in anger's ſpite,
Buys up my works and urges me to write:
And ſome there are, in theſe degenerate days,
Who ſhed upon my verſe the dew of praiſe.

* *His Idolatry.*] "*The covetous man who is an Idolater.*" St. Paul's Epiſtle to the Epheſians, chap. v. ver. 5.

Yes, there are ſome, who, true to Virtue's cauſe,
Excite my labours with their beſt applauſe.
—If I let looſe my daring Rhimes on thoſe,
Who, foes to Honour, are their Country's foes;
And ſcorning wealth ill-got, and idle ſtate,
If to the World's I join the Muſes' hate;
If, with impartial care and judgment nice,
I ſpare the weakneſs, but condemn the vice;
Forgive me, if theſe terrors I diſdain!—
Foul Spite ſhall ſcoff, and Vengeance threat in vain.
Let WHITEHEAD frame for Courts th' harmonious lie,
And weave his annual wreaths for Flattery:
I would not quit my honourable road
For thrice the profits of a Royal Ode.

L——. And yet, methinks, ſome little ſhare of praiſe
Would ſmooth the roughneſs of your rigid lays:
Nor are there wanting thoſe who ſhould receive
The faireſt tribute that the Muſe can give.

Is there no Peer, who, faithful to the cauſe
Of injur'd BRITAIN, claims your juſt applauſe?
Is there no Senator, whoſe ſoul diſdains
To bear about his mind the golden chains
Of baſe Corruption?——In theſe learned days,
Is there no Prelate who deſerves your praiſe?

P——. Yes; SAVILLE, CAMDEN, ROCKINGHAM ſhall join
To clothe with ponderous worth the ſplendid line.
A grand Triumvirate!—whoſe glorious name
Shall live applauded by the trump of Fame,
'Till conquer'd BRITAIN ſinks into a ſlave,
Or hides her ſhame beneath th' inſulting wave.
My Muſe a CHATHAM's glories ſhall rehearſe,
His hallow'd age ſhall dignify my verſe:
Nor ſhall I paſs unſung the Prelate's name,
Whoſe matchleſs virtues endleſs honours claim.
Fond Science views in him her favourite ſon,
And heaven-born Wiſdom marks him for her own.
No pride he knows;—his comprehenſive mind
Wears every grace that brightens human kind.

The friend of peace,—a foe to every ſtrife,
And bleſt with all the charities of life.
To ſuch conſummate worth I ne'er refuſe
My willing honours,—while th' elated Muſe
Shall her beſt flow'rets o'er the Mitre ſhed,
That beams, O Lowth, upon thy reverend head!

L——. At length, with joy, I ſee your equal lays
Can ſink to cenſure or can ſoar to praiſe;
On ſhameleſs Vice can ſtamp Shame's crimſon dye,
And give the Good their immortality.
—Thus the bold eagle leaves his azure way,
And ſeeks the carrion carcaſe for his prey;
There dips his beak;—but, when the banquet's done,
Replumes his wings and riſes to the Sun.

THE END.

In the course of the Winter will be Published,

SATIRE THE FIRST.

ADDRESSED TO

LORD VISCOUNT * * *.

Flebit, et insignis tota cantabitur urbe. HOR.

THE END.